

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 14 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 7-9, 15, and 16 have been amended. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the foregoing amendments to Claims 1, 7-9, 15, and 16 prior to further examination. No new matter has been introduced.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. Specifically, the Examiner stated that Claims 2, 7, 8, and 14-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 2. Claims 7 and 8 have been amended as independent claims to include the limitations of base Claim 1. Claim 9 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 14. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended as independent claims to include the limitations of base Claim 9.

Regarding Section 103 Rejections

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, and 9-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurihara (U.S. Patent No. 6,731,703) in view of Ueno (U.S. Patent No. 5,175,883). Claims 5 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurihara and Ueno as applied to Claim 3, and further in view of Takagi (U.S. Patent No. 6,556,636).

Independent Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the limitations of allowable claims 2 and 14 respectfully. As such, Claims 1 and 9 are considered allowable. Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103.

Claims 3-6 and 10-12 depend from allowable Claims 1 and 9 and are allowable for the same reasons. Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejections of Claims -6 and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. 103.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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